

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of the claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. **(Currently Amended)** Apparatus A twin roll caster comprising an apparatus for confining impurities of a molten metal fed by means of a discharger and contained into an area (3) of a strip continuous casting mould delimited by the side surfaces of two counter-rotating casting rolls with horizontal axis (1a, 1b) and by two containment side plates (2a, 2b) positioned in contact with the rolls' bases, characterized in that it comprises said apparatus comprising:

- a discharger (4) having at least two first series of holes (4a, 4a') for the molten metal supply, each series being formed by at least a pair of holes respectively directed towards one of the opposed side surfaces of the two rolls (1a, 1b) and at least a second pair of holes (4b, 4b') for the molten metal supply, each hole of such second pair being directed towards the side plate nearest thereto, and said at least one second pair of holes (4b, 4b') being positioned at a greater depth with respect to said two first series of holes (4a, 4a'); and

- at least two pairs of barriers (5) present in one part of the area (3) comprised between the end of the plunger nozzle and the containment side plates (2a, 2b), forming a Y-shaped angle between the cross-sections of said barriers therebetween, lying on a same horizontal plane, an Y angle.

2. **(Currently Amended)** Apparatus The twin roll caster comprising the apparatus for confining the impurities of a molten metal contained into a strip continuous casting mould according to claim 1, wherein the holes of said first series of holes (4a, 4a') of the

discharger (4) are positioned symmetrically with respect to the plunger nozzle centre and slanted on the horizontal plane by an X angle of at least 5° with respect to the perpendicular of the rolls' axis, so that each hole of each pair be directed in a divergent way towards the side plate nearest thereto.

3. (Currently Amended) Apparatus The twin roll caster comprising the apparatus for confining the impurities of a molten metal contained into a strip continuous casting mould according to claim 2, wherein the holes of said first series of holes (4a, 4a') of the discharger (4) are slanted on the horizontal plane by an X angle optionally different for each pair of holes.

4. (Currently Amended) The twin roll caster comprising the apparatus Apparatus for confining the impurities of a molten metal contained into a strip continuous casting mould according to ~~any of the claims~~ claim 1 to 3, wherein said second pair of holes (4b, 4b') of the discharger (4) is positioned at a depth greater by at least 5 mm with respect to any of the holes of the first two series of holes (4a, 4a').

5. (Currently Amended) The twin roll caster comprising the apparatus Apparatus for confining the impurities of a molten metal contained into a strip continuous casting mould according to ~~any of the claims~~ claim 1 to 4, wherein the holes of said second pair (4b, 4b') of the discharger (4) are slanted downwards by an angle ~~comprised ranging~~ between 0° and 30°.

6. (Currently Amended) The twin roll caster comprising the apparatus Apparatus for confining the impurities of a molten metal contained into a strip continuous casting mould according to ~~any of the claims~~ claim 1 to 4, wherein the holes of said first series of holes (4a, 4a') of the discharger (4) are slanted upwards by an angle ~~comprised ranging~~ between

0° and 45°.

7. (Currently Amended) The twin roll caster comprising the apparatus

Apparatus for confining the impurities of a molten metal contained into a strip continuous casting mould according to any of the claims claim 1 to 6, wherein the holes of said first series of holes (4a, 4a') of the discharger (4) have round-shaped cross-section with a diameter comprised ranging between 5 and 20mm.

8. (Currently Amended) The twin roll caster comprising the apparatus

Apparatus for confining the impurities of a molten metal contained into a strip continuous casting mould according to any of the claims claim 1 to 6, wherein the holes of said first series of holes (4a, 4a') of the discharger (4) have a cross-section with a polygonal shape.

9. (Currently Amended) The twin roll caster comprising the apparatus

Apparatus for confining the impurities of a molten metal contained into a strip continuous casting mould according to any of the claims claim 1 to 6, wherein the holes of said first series of holes (4a, 4a') of the discharger (4) have a partially round-shaped round shape and a partially polygonally-shaped cross-section.

10. (Currently Amended) The twin roll caster comprising the apparatus

Apparatus for confining the impurities of a molten metal contained into a strip continuous casting mould according to claim 8 or 9, wherein the polygonal holes of said first series of holes (4a, 4a') of the discharger (4) are, at least partially, horizontal have a cross-section having a height lower less than 20 mm.

11. (Currently Amended) The twin roll caster comprising the apparatus

Apparatus for confining the impurities of a molten metal contained into a strip continuous casting mould according to any of the preceding claims claim 1, wherein the ratio between the

total area of said second pair of holes (4b, 4b') and the total area of said first series of holes (4a, 4a') is comprised ranges between 0.15 and 0.30.

12. (Currently Amended) The twin roll caster comprising the apparatus

Apparatus for confining the impurities of a molten metal contained into a strip continuous casting mould according to any of the claims claim 1 to 11, wherein said discharger (4) has, in the centre, at least an additional hole directed perpendicularly to the side surface of the rolls, positioned between said first series of holes (4a, 4a') of the discharger (4).

13. (Currently Amended) The twin roll caster comprising the apparatus

Apparatus for confining the impurities of a molten metal contained into a strip continuous casting mould according to any of the claims claim 1 to 12, wherein said Y angle is comprised ranges between 5° and 45°.

14. (Currently Amended) The twin roll caster comprising the apparatus

Apparatus for confining the impurities of a molten metal contained into a strip continuous casting mould according to any of the claims claim 1 to 13, wherein each of said barriers (5) is constituted by one or more parts of refractory or ceramic material containing compounds selected from the group comprising Al₂O₃, BN, ZrO₂, SiC, SiN, SiO₂, MgO and combinations thereof.

15. (Currently Amended) The twin roll caster comprising the apparatus

Apparatus for confining the impurities of a molten metal contained into a strip continuous casting mould according to any of the claims claim 1 to 14, wherein said barriers (5) are slanted with respect to the vertical.

16. (Currently Amended) The twin roll caster comprising the apparatus

Apparatus for confining the impurities of a molten metal contained into a strip continuous

Appln. No. 10/577,646
Amdt. dated December 7, 2007
Reply to Office action of September 7, 2007

casting mould according to any of the claims claim 1 to 15, wherein said barriers (5) are reversibly fastened to a lid positioned in the mould above the molten metal bath or they said barriers (5) are integrating an integral part of the lid itself.

17. (Currently Amended) The twin roll caster comprising the apparatus
Apparatus for confining the impurities of a molten metal contained into a strip continuous casting mould according to any of the claims claim 1 to 15, wherein said barriers (5) are fastened to said discharger (4) or they belong to the discharger itself.

18. (Currently Amended) The twin roll caster comprising the apparatus
Apparatus for confining the impurities of a molten metal contained into a strip continuous casting mould according to any of the claims claim 1 to 13, wherein said barriers (5) are formed by jets of inert or reducing gas directed from the a top towards the a surface of the molten metal.

19. (Currently Amended) The twin roll caster comprising the apparatus
Apparatus for confining the impurities of a molten metal contained into a strip continuous casting mould according to claim 18, wherein said gas, before being blown on the molten metal surface, is preheated at a temperature greater than 100 C°.

20. (Currently Amended) Use of the twin roll caster comprising the apparatus
for confining the impurities of a molten metal contained into a strip continuous casting mould according to any of the claims claim 1 to 19, wherein during use, said barriers (5) are positioned at least 10 mm away from the side surface of the rolls, at least 20 mm away from the side plates (2a, 2b) and not less than 10 mm away from the discharger.

21. (Currently Amended) Use of the twin roll caster comprising the apparatus
for confining the impurities of a molten metal contained into a strip continuous casting mould

Appln. No. 10/577,646
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according to the preceding claim 1, wherein during use said barriers (5) are partially dipped into the molten metal for at least 5 mm.